AUG 3 1964

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Text of President's A-11 Statements

1st Announcement

The United States has successfully developed an advanced experimental jet aircraft, the A-11, which has been tested in sustained flight at more than 2,000 mph., and at altitudes in excess of 70,000 ft.

The performance of the A-11 far exceeds that of any other aircraft in the world today. The development of this aircraft has been made possible by major advances in aircraft technology of great significance to both military and commercial application.

Several A-11 aircraft are now being flight-tested at Edwards Air Force Base, in California.

The existence of this program is being disclosed today to permit the orderly exploitation of this advanced technology in our military and commercial planes. This advanced experimental aircraft, capable of high speed and high altitude, and long-range performance at thousands of miles, constitutes the technological accomplishment that will facilitate the achievement of a number of important military and commercial requirements. The A-11 aircraft now at Edwards Air Force Base are undergoing extensive tests to determine their capabilities as long-range interceptors. The development of supersonic commercial transport aircraft will also be greatly assisted by the lessons learned from this A-11 program, for example, one of the most important technological achievements in this project has been the mastery of the metallurgy and fabrication of titanium metal which is required for the high temperatures experienced by aircraft travelling at more than three times the speed of sound.

Arrangements are being made to make this and other important technical developments available under appropriate safeguards to those directly engaged in the supersonic transport program.

This project was first started in 1959. Appropriate members of the Senate and House have been kept fully informed on the program since the day of its inception.

The Lockheed Aircraft Corp. at Burbank, Calif., is the manufacturer of the aircraft. The aircraft engine, the J58, was designed and built by the Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Div., United Aircraft Corp. The experimental fire control and air-to-air missile system for the A-11 was developed by the Hughes Aircraft Co.

In view of the continuing importance of these developments to our national security, the detailed performance of the A-11 will remain strictly classified and all individuals associated with the program have been directed to refrain from making any further disclosure concerning this program.

I do not expect to discuss this important matter further with you today but certain additional information will be made available to all of you after this meeting. If you care, Mr. Salinger will make the appropriate arrangements.

2nd Announcement

I would like to announce the successful development of a major new strategic manned aircraft system, which will be employed by the Strategic Air Command. This system employs the new SR-71 aircraft, and provides a long range advanced strategic reconnaissance plane for military use, capable of worldwide reconnaissance for military operations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, when reviewing the RS-70, emphasized the importance of the strategic reconnaissance mission. The SR-71 aircraft reconnaissance system is the most advanced in the world. The aircraft will fly at more than three times the speed of sound. It will operate at altitudes in excess of 80,000 feet. It will use the most advanced observation equipment of all kinds in the world. The aircraft will provide the strategic forces of the United States with an outstanding long range reconnaissance capability.

The system will be used during periods of military hostilities and in other situations in which the United States military forces may be confronting foreign military forces.

The SR-71 uses the same J58 engine as the experimental interceptor previously announced, but it is substantially heavier and it has a longer range. The considerably heavier gross weight permits it to accommodate the multiple reconnaissance sensors needed by the Strategic Air Command to accomplish their strategic reconnaissance mission in a military environment.

This billion dollar program was initiated in February of 1963. The first operational aircraft will begin flight testing in early 1965. Deployment of production units to the Strategic Air Command will begin shortly thereafter.

Appropriate members of Congress have been kept fully informed on the nature of and the progress in this aircraft program. Further information on this major advanced aircraft system will be released from time to time at the appropriate military secret classification levels.